



**Submission No 41**

**Inquiry into RAAF F-111 Deseal/Reseal Workers and their Families**

**Name: Mr Neil Clark**

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I NEIL CLARK (A122864 CPL. MTRIM.RETIRED ),Knowing what I know would not have gone anywhere near the RAG HANGAR.

The working enviroment we had to endure was atrocious to say the least, what with the lack of proper safety equiptment the unpleasent smell and the discrimination we had to put up with was of real concern to us all who worked at the RAG HANGAR.

Working at that area we weren't allowed into the mess because of the odour that came from our persons and clothing.

Part of my duties as NCO/IC TRIM SHOP was to maintain the RAG HANGAR and make sure it was in a serviceable condition.

I received help mainly from 3AD BODY SHOP as I was part of that section at 3AD GEMS.

I spent 11-5 years at AMBERLEY from JULY 1977 to JANURARY 1988, and during this time I worked on the RAG HANGAR numerous times, on occasions we would eat our smoko or lunch sitting atop the drums that were stored beside the RAG HANGAR ( not knowing) what SR51 was .(we certainly know now).

The leaching of the chemicals made the canvas deteriorate and thats why it had to be replaced so many times ,the roof panels of the hangar would fill up with water from rain and we would use a crane and get onto the roof and were waist deep in the contaminated water and bail from panel to panel until it was completely empty.

The alluminium frame work was always covered with a white powdery scaley substance and it would make hands and skin have a very dry feel, at times we would use a fire truck to hose off this substance before we would put a new cladding on.

Removal of the contaminated canvas panels off the hangar was done by cutting them with stanley knives, they were then pulled away from the rooftop by means of a truck and dragged to the pits where fire section would burn them with some of the SR51 as well.

During the burn off we would still be up inside the rooftop cutting away the next panel until the complete canvas cladding had been removed even though the smoke and fumes would be going into the atmosohere we were breathing these contmaminates into our system.

My clothes were bought home and would be laundered with the normal family wash which inadvertently caused my families clothing to be contaminated also.

The perspiration from my body left an offensive odour and stained the bed linen and mattress to such an extent that it had to be replaced.

Nothing has been proven as yet but there has been a lot of wives that end up with different types of cancers , a lot of children have been born with abnormalities ( my wife died from BREAST CANCER) in 1998 don't know if there is a link,testing on our families is still to be carried out.

On the last time I (we) worked on the RAG HANGAR we noticed that conditions changed DEMOUNTABLE CABINS were set up complete with washing machines and showers, before any meal breaks or smoko breaks we had to shower and get new disposable overalls, the old ones were destroyed

Before returning to our normal work area we had to have clean normal service overalls. If it was a safe working environment why was this supplied for us to wear while working at the RAG HANGAR..

I have attended to all the doctors and specialists appointments that VETERAN AFFAIRS sent me to and have seen what has been reported but am bewildered by all of it as other members received the EX-GRATIA PAYMENT and I was told I don't meet the requirements,( what was I doing all that time working on the RAG HANGAR).

After getting out of the AIR FORCE and finding out about the problems I am suffering with it became impossible to get full time employment as these conditions stop me from carrying on in a normal manner,( constant headaches,breathing problems,sore joints, sleeping difficulties,gut problems, anxiety,memory and being lethargic etc.).

My losses cannot be put into a monetary figure as I have never tried to put that value on it I have enough worries treating every day as it comes .

From the earliest meetings that we all attended the (CHIEF OF AIR STAFF AND DR.HORSLEY )told us all that there would be no discrimination as to whether you worked inside the TANKS or not and that we all have contamination and would all be well looked after.

WE SURE WERE RAILROADED.

I AM A MEMBER OF F111 DESEAL /RESEAL SUPPORT GROUP

NEIL CLARK